

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
21 July 2005 (21.07.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
WO 2005/066380 A1

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: C22C 1/04, B22F 3/10

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US2003/038469

(22) International Filing Date: 1 December 2003 (01.12.2003)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

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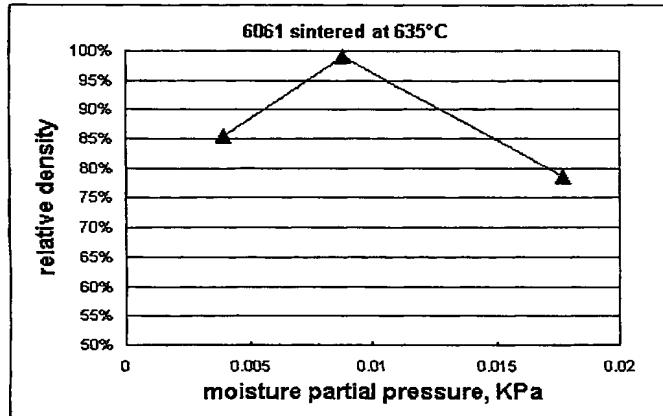
(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:  
— with international search report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: PROCESSES FOR SINTERING ALUMINUM AND ALUMINUM ALLOY COMPONENTS



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(57) Abstract: Methods for sintering aluminum powder comprise providing aluminum powder and heating the aluminum powder in a nitrogen atmosphere containing a partial pressure of water vapor in the range of about 0.001 kPa to about 0.020 kPa to sinter the aluminum powder to a transverse rupture strength of at least about 13.8 MPa. The aluminum powder is not pressed together by a mechanical force that substantially deforms particles of said aluminum powder either prior to or during the step of heating. Articles comprising sintered aluminum powder. The sintered aluminum powder has a transverse rupture strength of at least about 13.8 MPa. The microstructure of the sintered aluminum powder contains no compositional concentration gradients indicative of the use of a sintering aid and no evidence of particle deformation having occurred by an application of a mechanical force prior to or during the sintering of the aluminum powder.